



The Spectacle

From the Office Down the Hall

Keeping our Balance

What is the most important thing about Arlington House? It is a place of terrible decision. It contains objects Robert E. Lee and George Washington once held in their hands. It is a place where men and women bound by slavery lived and gained their freedom. Arlington House provides a quite place within a National Cemetery, a place away from the charge of the city where visitors can look out over national icons, gaining new perspective through both view and historic understanding. Arlington House is a schoolroom for our children. The Ancient Order of Hibernians find a link here through George Washington Parke Custis to their Irish heritage. The woodlands hold trees that were young during the American Revolution. I could go on.

A contemporary of Lee's—at least for a few years—and a fellow Virginian signed the Organic Act into law in August, 1916, creating the National Park Service. However, despite Wallace Stegner's assertion that the national parks are America's greatest idea, President Woodrow Wilson's official White House biography fails to mention it. In fact, there is an odd silence surrounding the origin of the Organic Act. Like most legislation, there apparently was a fair amount of wrangling and time spent in committee hearings, but most of the discussion centered on how much it would cost. There was a war coming and an election (perhaps much the same thing) and discussion was soon tabled to get the bill out of committee. There does not even appear to be any kind of grand pronouncement by Wilson when he signed it. So we are left with Frederick Law Olmstead



Arlington House - well and north slave quarters

Junior's preamble to the legislation to satisfy our search for intent.

The "...purpose is to conserve the scenery and the natural and historic objects and the wild life therein and to provide for the enjoyment of the same in such manner and by such means as will leave them unimpaired for the enjoyment of future generations."

And there lies the rub. As we are all clearly charged as advocates for Arlington House, I walked around the office and asked what was most important about the House. Not surprisingly, I heard, "visitor understanding;" "our candle light program;" "Robert E. Lee lived there;" "the view;" "the relationship with the history of the National Cemetery;"

etc. Our advocacy is explicit not only through our specific legislation, but through the mission of the National Park Service. We are told to "conserve the...historic objects" at Arlington House. But we are also told we must provide visitors with a chance to enjoy them. As a concept this is a wonderful juxtaposition of ideas that is obviously embraced by those who work here, but what if a visitor steals one of our historic objects?! Or breaks one by accident?

And just as horribly—at least from a mission standpoint—what if a visitor leaves Arlington House without gaining the enjoyment of understanding? Either way we have failed in our primary mission. So we seek a balance.

(continued on page 4)

Area Special Events

March 3-6

"Battle of Hampton Roads Weekend" at the Mariners' Museum in Newport News, VA. Lectures, living history and much more during this annual event commemorating the battle between the CSS Virginia and the USS Monitor. More info: 757-591-7738 or <http://www.mariner.org/>

March 4-5

"Celebrate South," the Museum of the Confederacy's annual event in Richmond, VA includes talks, tours and dress ball with the focus on the Confederate navy, the theme of the museum's new exhibition. Details: 804-649-1861 or www.moc.org.

March 4-6

Reenactment, Battle for Broxton Bridge (140th anniversary) at Broxton Bridge Plantation, Route 601, 7 miles south of Ehrhardt, SC. Gates open Saturday and Sunday 9 am-5 pm. Battles at 2 pm. Day-ticket \$6 adults. Candlelight tour and bonfire dance 6 pm Saturday (\$5 adult additional). 803-625-4697 or email bbcbbc@islc.net.

March 5

Civil War Seminar at Longwood University in Farmville, VA sponsored by the Appomattox Court House National Historical Park and the university. Annual event attracts top names. Free. Details: 434-352-8987 extension 32.

March 9-13

Seminar, "Great Battles and Turning Points of the Civil War," wide range of topics led by Gary Gallagher and James McPherson in Charleston. Sponsored by the University of Virginia. Complete details: call 800-346-3882 or www.uvatravellearn.org.

March 12

Seminar, "Gettysburg, PA: Beyond the Battle," the town before and after the fighting. Includes field program. Sponsored by the Friends of the National Parks at Gettysburg and the Adams County Historical Society. 9 am-4 pm. \$60.

Registration: www.friendsofgettysburg.org or 717-334-0772.

Living history, life in Civil War navies at the USS Constellation in Baltimore's (MD) Inner Harbor. Noon. Free with admission. 410-539-1797 or www.constellation.org.

Living history, "Clara Barton: Battlefield Angel," at the National Museum of Civil War Medicine in Frederick, MD. 11 am-3 pm. Free with admission. 301-695-1864 or www.civilwarmed.org.

March 19

Bus tour, "The Confederate Retreat from Gettysburg," led by Ted Alexander. Leaves 7:30 am from the Air and Space Museum on the Mall in Washington, DC. \$132. A Smithsonian Associates event. 202-252-0012 or www.civilwarstudies.org.

Conference, "Maryland and the Civil War - A Regional Perspective," at Carroll Community College in Westminster, MD. 8:45 am-3:30 pm. Fee charged. www.carrollcc.edu or call 888-221-9748.

Lecture, "The Cooper Shop Refreshment Saloon: A Touch of Home in Philadelphia," detailing the work of women who served meals and gave medical care to soldiers passing through the city, at Fort Ward Museum in Alexandria, VA. 1 pm. \$5. 703-838-4848.

Special tours of the Kernstown (VA) Battlefield. Anniversary event offers guided tours of two different areas of the battlefield (Pritchard-Grim Farm and Rose Hill). Begins at 10 am for the early phase and 1 pm at Rose Hill. Guided tours \$5 at both sites. Both properties open 9 am-4 pm. More info: www.kernstownbattle.org.

Living history, "Committed to the Cause: Women's Contributions to the War Effort," at Endview Plantation in Newport News, VA. 10 am-4 pm. Free with admission. 757-887-1862 or www.endview.org

Bus tour, "Along this River: The Warwick-Yorktown Line," leaves from Lee Hall Mansion in Newport News, VA. 9 am-4 pm. \$35. Reservations. 757-888-3371.

March 25-26

Seminar, "If the North Had Lost the Civil War: The Trial of President Abraham Lincoln." Historians discuss the merits of the Lincoln administration with a living history mock trial of the President, at Liberty University in Lynchburg, VA. \$55 registration includes some meals. More info: call 434-592-4031 or visit www.liberty.edu/civilwar.

March 26

Southside Heritage Days includes Civil War Living history at Fork Inn in Sutherland (on the Lee's Retreat Driving Tour on US 460 west of Petersburg, VA). Free. 804-265-8141.

Living history at Five Forks, a unit of the Petersburg (VA) National Battlefield, west of the city. Free. www.nps.gov/pete or 804-732-3531.

March 27

Walking tours, Fort Stedman on the Petersburg (VA) National Battlefield. www.nps.gov/pete or 804-732-3531.

Arlington Historical Society banquet

Arlington House is cosponsoring the Arlington Historical Society banquet in April featuring guest speaker Brian Lamb, founder of C-Span. The banquet is cosponsored with AHA, the Black Heritage Museum, and HALRB. It will be on Wednesday, April 27 in the Clarendon Ballroom.

Significant Historic Events in March

March 1838

On the way to St. Louis to complete an engineering project, the Lees stopped in Baltimore, and Mrs. Lee persuaded her husband to have his portrait painted by American artist William Edward West (1788-1857). As Mrs. Lee felt he should be depicted in full dress uniform, wearing his epaulettes, she had her mother send them by train to Baltimore. Mrs. Lee had her portrait made at the same time. Today the original portraits hang at Washington and Lee University, and copies hang over the mantels in the White Parlor.

March 1855

Robert E. Lee was appointed Lieutenant Colonel of the new Second Cavalry raised for service on the frontier.

March 2, 1865

General Lee proposed to General Grant that they meet to discuss “the possibility of arriving at a satisfactory adjustment of the present unhappy difficulties.” Lee received

Grant’s negative reply on March 4. President Lincoln had decided that “no peace terms would be discussed with the states in rebellion until Confederate forces laid down their arms: the South must surrender first.”

March 4, 1925

Congress approved legislation authorizing the restoration of Arlington House as the ‘Lee Mansion National Memorial.’ It was believed that this Congressional action “would be tangible recognition by the country, North and South, that the bitterness of other days is entirely gone.” The Secretary of War was ordered to restore the house “as nearly as may be practicable ... to the condition in which it existed immediately prior to the Civil War.”

March 4, 1929

Four years after Congress authorized the creation of the “Lee Mansion National Memorial,’ the first significant appropriation of \$90, 000 to restore and furnish Arlington House was approved by the War Department.

March 5, 1798

George Washington wrote a frank assessment of the character of his ward, GWP Custis, for the head of St. John’s College in Annapolis, where Custis had been enrolled in February after his expulsion from the College of New Jersey (Princeton). Washington wrote that Custis possessed “competent talents to fit him for any studies, but they are counteracted by an indolence of mind which renders it difficult to draw them into action.”

March 11, 1824

Robert E. Lee was appointed to West Point by President James Monroe, but “owing to the long list of applicants, he could not be admitted until July 1, 1825.”

March 12, 1850

G. W. Custis Lee was appointed to West Point by President Zachary Taylor.

March 16, 1861

Robert E. Lee was commissioned a full Colonel in the United States Army and given command of the 1st Cavalry Regiment. Abraham Lincoln signed the commission, and Lee did not hesitate to accept it when it was forwarded to him on March 28.

March 22, 1932

Not yet fully furnished, Arlington House was opened to the public as a historic house museum.

March 25, 1818

Henry ‘Lighthorse Harry’ Lee died at “Dungeness,” the estate of General Nathaniel Greene’s daughter on Cumberland Island, Georgia. Henry Lee was enroute home to Virginia from Barbados where he had tried to regain his health and escape his creditors. He was buried in the Greene family cemetery on Cumberland Island, his remains now rest in the Lee crypt at Lexington.

March 29, 1836

GWP Custis was reappointed Justice of the Peace for Alexandria County by President Andrew Jackson, having first been appointed in 1818 by President James Madison.



National Park Service
U.S. Department of the Interior

Arlington House was the home of Robert E. Lee and his family for thirty years and is uniquely associated with the Washington and Custis families. It is now preserved as a memorial to General Lee, who gained the respect of Americans in both the North and the South.

Arlington House
The Robert E. Lee Memorial
c/o George Washington Memorial Parkway
Turkey Run Park
McLean, VA 22101

Phone
703-235-1530

Web Site
<http://www.nps.gov/arho>

The Spectacle online
<http://www.nps.gov/arho/tour/spectacle.html>

The National Park Service cares for the special places saved by the American people so that all may experience our heritage.

AN IMPORTANT REMINDER

Please contact Delphine Gross no later than the 20th of each month with availability dates and times to be posted the following month (Please call by March 20th with April information). Even if you are a regularly scheduled VIP please contact Delphine to confirm your availability. Again, the contact number is (703) 235-1530 ext. 227. Please leave the dates and times you are available on the voice mail. Your cooperation is greatly appreciated.

History Happenings



Frances Parkinson at the time of her first visit to Arlington, c. 1900

Congratulations to Vanna Lewis and Patricia Bohn for winning the February trivia contest! The correct answer to the question is Frances Parkinson Keyes. Mrs. Keyes, the

wife of Senator Henry Keyes of New Hampshire, was a renowned writer and a dedicated historic preservationist. Among her many novels are *Senator Marlowe's Daughter*, *The Royal Box*, *Joy Street*, and *Steamboat Gothic*, but perhaps her most famous work is *Dinner at Antoine's*. So popular were her books that they were sometimes read aloud in English bomb shelters during the Battle of Britain. In the 1930s, Mrs. Keyes converted to Catholicism and wrote several religious works on the lives of saints.

Even as a young girl, Frances was deeply interested in history. She greatly admired Robert E. Lee, and was thrilled to visit Arlington House for the first time around 1900. Once inside, her excitement vanished. Dismayed by the home's gloomy atmosphere and distraught at the lack of any evidence of the Lees' family life, the young girl rushed from the house. Near tears, on Arlington's portico she made a prophetic vow. "When

the time comes that I have some influence, I'm going to make people see what a disgrace it is that General Lee's home should be left in such a condition. I'm going to do something about it." Many years later, Mrs. Keyes remembered her girlhood pledge and did much to bring about Arlington's eventual restoration. She later moved to New Orleans, and there worked tirelessly to save and restore the former home of Confederate General Pierre Gustave Toutant Beauregard.

During Women's History Month, consider learning more about this fascinating woman. Her numerous novels are still widely available, and her memoir *All Flags Flying* recounts her efforts to save Arlington House. For a brief autobiography, check out the website <http://www.catholicauthors.com/keyes.html>. For her determination to "do something" for Arlington House and her tireless advocacy of historic preservation, we owe Frances Parkinson Keyes a debt of gratitude.

From the Office Down the Hall (continue from page 1)

We allow visitors to enjoy the house by peering in from the relatively sterile hallways into the rich, object filled rooms of history and moment. The feeling is really more like a museum than visiting someone's house, but we are successfully conserving the objects while also letting people see them. In contrast, across the river at Tudor Place, visitors have more access to the rooms. They get a tour that wanders a little more openly through each space. At the Maggie Walker home in Richmond, visitors "enjoy" that site so much that it nearly feels that you are wending amongst the furniture. But at Arlington House we have 450,000 visitors a year—much more than these other places—and we just cannot allow that much enjoyment! This is too bad, because the feeling you get standing in the Family Parlor, peering up at the arches beneath which the Lees got married, is a lot stronger than the one you get peeping in from the doorway. Similarly, looking past elbows into the Lee

chamber leaves you with the cold knowledge of a museum. But when you walk inside and pace the floor, turning to see the close walls as Lee must have done, a shiver runs down your spine. It is almost more "enjoyment" than you can stand!

With that in mind, I have recently tried to solve a very old problem with the way visitors get to experience parts of Arlington House. If only it were possible to route visitors through the Family Parlor soon after they enter the House, they would get the wonderfully intimate feeling of being in that room and they would also see often missed, but very important North Wing as a normal part of their route to the second floor. This would greatly improve their "enjoyment" of the House—their experience and their understanding as we term this today.

But—and here's the rub again—that room is filled with delicate, priceless objects! And,

perhaps more than any other room, we have the knowledge and the furniture to exhibit it very much as it may have appeared when the Lees lived there. Yet if we let everyone wander through it, we will have to move most of those important objects out of harm's—arms—way, which would diminish the very atmosphere, the very "enjoyment," we were trying to achieve.

And so once again we seek a balance. You may have recently seen contractors working in the family parlor installing additional motion detectors. This increased security measure would provide an alarm corridor through the Family Parlor. It spreads a detection curtain along both sides of the path so that anyone reaching toward an object would set off alarms. However that doesn't mean we should start sending all 450,000 visitors through the Family Parlor.

(continued on page 5)

Saint Patrick's Day

Arlington House VIPs are invited to join the National Park Service, representatives of the Ancient Order of Hibernians, and the Embassy of Ireland in observing St. Patrick's Day and the planting of shamrocks in memory of George Washington Parke Custis on Saturday, March 12th, at 12:30 p.m.

The formal program includes a welcome, remarks, and the presentation of the GWP Custis Award. Those gathered will then be invited to join the procession to the Custis gravesite for the planting of the shamrocks, with respect to his 1844 request. The color guard of the Ancient Order of Hibernians traditionally lead the procession.

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Instead, we have gained the ability to provide very special programs where small groups, under controlled circumstances, can enter and fully experience being *in* that space. This might be something we want to consider when we are celebrating the anniversary of the Lee Wedding for example. We have also gained the option to allow visitors to step into the room from either side. Even if they only enter a few feet, I believe the new feeling of "enjoyment" would be remarkable.

It is our difficult, but welcome task to provide for the enjoyment of the House, but also leave it unimpaired. It is a tricky balancing act. However this new security curtain may give us one more rabbit we can pull out when needed to help visitors truly "enjoy" the historic objects therein. I can't wait to see the look on their faces as they gain an even deeper understanding about what is important about Arlington House.

Kendell Thompson
Site Manager
Arlington House,
The Robert E. Lee Memorial

Those Nifty Fifties



On Saturday, March 26 at 1:00 pm, VIP Vanna Lewis will be giving a formal lecture on "Those Nifty Fifties: The Era of the Hoopskirt." She will be giving a full presentation on dress in the 1850's, replete with slides, vintage dresses, and demonstrations. This is a perfect opportunity to answer all of your clothing inquiries as she explains everything from ladies footwear to proper undergarment etiquette. The lecture is perfect for volunteers and is open to the public so you can and should bring along anyone whom you think would be interested. Vanna has

studied the clothing and etiquette of the era since 1995 and has been an Arlington House volunteer since 1994.

The talk will be held at The Women in Military Service Memorial which is at the main entrance of Arlington National Cemetery. VIP's can drive up and park at the OAB (Old Administration Building) or take the metro blue line to the Arlington National Cemetery stop. Parking is also available for guests for a fee at the Cemetery Visitors center. We hope to see you there!

RECIPES OF THE MONTH

The first recipe this month is from Mary Randolph's *The Virginia House-wife*, first published in 1824. You may remember that Mary Randolph was a cousin of George Washington Parke Custis and his wife Molly, and is believed to be Mary Anna Randolph Custis' godmother. Mary Randolph's grave is located north of Arlington House, along the Custis Walk.

Sweet-Potato Pudding

Boil one pound of sweet potatoes very tender, rub them while hot through a colander, add six eggs, well beaten, three quarters of a pound of powdered sugar, three quarters of butter, and some grated nutmeg and lemon-peel, with a glass of brandy; put a paste in the dish, and when the pudding is done, sprinkle the top with sugar, and cover it with bits of citron. Irish potato pudding is made in the same manner, but is not so good.

While researching 19th century recipes on-line, I found a recipe for chocolate mousse that perhaps some of the many chocolate lovers here at Arlington House might actually like to try at home. The following information is from the Culinary Institute of America, and will be featured in a new book, *Cooking at Home with the Culinary Institute of America*, to be published later this year by Wiley.

Chocolate mousse, besides being delectable, also has a fascinating history.

It was first known as "mayonnaise de chocolat" – and, even more interesting, was invented by world-renowned French post-impressionist painter Henri Toulouse-Lautrec in the late 19th century.

Primarily famous as a bohemian artist, Toulouse-Lautrec was also an experienced cook who found time to dabble in creating signature dishes.

To make chocolate mousse, you prepare the chocolate by chopping it into small pieces and melting it in a bowl set over slowly simmering water. Alternatively, you can use a microwave to melt the chocolate, but the process should be monitored carefully to make sure the chocolate is not overheated.

Chocolate Mousse

2 large egg yolks plus 1 large egg white
1 ½ T brandy
2T sugar
¾ cup coarsely chopped bittersweet chocolate, melted
½ cup heavy cream

Combine the egg yolks with the brandy and 1T sugar in the top of a double boiler or a stainless steel bowl set over simmering water. Whisk until mixture is very warm, about 110 degrees F, 6-8 minutes. Add the melted chocolate. Remove from the heat and whip with a handheld mixer on high speed until cool.

In another bowl, combine the egg white with the remaining 1 T sugar and whisk until it holds a medium peak when whisk is turned upright.

In another bowl, whip the cream until it holds soft peaks when whisk is turned upright.

Add one-third of the egg whites to the chocolate mixture, and gently fold until incorporated. Fold in the remaining egg whites, then fold in the whipped cream until just blended. Spoon into serving dishes, cover, and chill for at least three hours and up to 24 hours before serving. Makes four servings

March 2005

Arlington House VIP Calendar

Sunday	Monday	Tuesday	Wednesday	Thursday	Friday	Saturday
		1 Kathie Lipovac 12:30-4:30 Fred Hoffman 1:00-4:00	2 Jack McKay 9:30-12:30 Arlene Riley 2:00-4:00	3 Charlotte Needham and Elaine Street 10:30-1:00	4 Joan Cashell 9:30-11:30	5 Elene Paul 10:00-3:00
6 Jim Pearson 12:30-4:30	7 Fred Hoffman 1:00-4:00	8 Fred Hoffman 1:00-4:00	9 Jack McKay 9:30-12:30 Arlene Riley 2:00-4:00	10 Charlotte Needham and Elaine Street 10:30-1:00	11 Joan Cashell 9:30-11:30	12 Delia Rios 11:00-1:00 Marmie Edwards 12:30-4:30 J.B. McCraw 12:30-4:30
13 Elene Paul 11:00-3:00 Jim Pearson 12:30-4:30	14 Jo Schoolfield 10:00-2:00 Fred Hoffman 1:00-4:00	15 Kathie Lipovac 12:30-4:30 Fred Hoffman 1:00-4:00	16 Jack McKay 9:30-12:30 Arlene Riley 2:00-4:00	17 Charlotte Needham 10:30-1:00 Kathie Lipovac 12:30-4:30	18 Joan Cashell 9:30-11:30	19 Lisa Kittinger 11:00-4:30 Delia Rios 11:00-1:00
20 Kirsten Wolfe 9:30-4:30 Jim Pearson 12:30-4:30	21 Fred Hoffman 1:00-4:00	22 Fred Hoffman 1:00-4:00	23 Jack McKay 9:30-12:30 Arlene Riley 2:00-4:00	24 Charlotte Needham 10:30-1:00	25 Joan Cashell 9:30-11:30	26 Delia Rios 11:00-1:00 Lisa Kittinger 1:00-3:30
27 Jim Pearson 12:30-4:30	28 Jo Schoolfield 10:00-2:00 Fred Hoffman 1:00-4:00	29 Fred Hoffman 1:00-4:00	30 Jack McKay 9:30-12:30 Arlene Riley 2:00-4:00	31		

If you are available to volunteer, but are not on the calendar please call Delphine so you can be added to the schedule.



National Park Service
U.S. Department of the Interior

Arlington House
The Robert E. Lee Memorial
c/o George Washington Memorial Parkway
Turkey Run Park
McLean, VA 22101

<<Name>>
<<Address>>
<<CityStateZip>>

EXPERIENCE YOUR AMERICA™

The Spectacle is a monthly newsletter for the volunteers of Arlington House, The Robert E. Lee Memorial.

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Volunteers Needed

The roster of active volunteers is in dire need of additional names! If you know anyone interested in joining our ranks please refer them to Delphine Gross, Volunteer Coordinator (703) 235-1530 ext 227.

